

BEDFORD SPRINGS HOTEL
Bedford Springs Hotel Historic District
Old U.S. Route 220
Bedford vicinity
Bedford County
Pennsylvania

HABS PA-6733
PA-6733

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BEDFORD SPRINGS HOTEL

HABS No. PA-6733

- Location:** Old U.S. Route 220, Bedford vicinity, Bedford County, Pennsylvania.
- Significance:** Founded in 1806, Bedford Springs Hotel was major mineral spa and resort destination throughout the nineteenth century. The hotel continued to function until the late 1980s and includes a collection of six contiguous buildings constructed from 1806 to 1924. These buildings and some additional support structures form a National Historic Landmark district.
- Description:** The central building housing the lobby and main dining rooms is a three story brick Greek Revival structure with a hipped roof. It has a raised first floor with a portico stretching the length of the elevation. The portico roof is supported by two-story Doric columns. A plain pediment and entablature over the center six columns highlights the entrance at the middle of the façade. Four hipped-roof, wood frame guest room buildings to the north were built from 1806 to 1890 and share large multi-story verandas. These porches have a variety of wood railings and support columns with decorative brackets and bargeboards. The continuous porches unify an assemblage of structures with a variety of heights and decorative details.
- History:** Bedford Springs Hotel was founded in 1806 by Bedford native Dr. James Anderson. During the heyday of mineral spa resort hotels in the nineteenth century, Bedford Springs Hotel was as well known as Saratoga Springs in New York or the Greenbriar in West Virginia. President James Buchanan used the Springs as his summer White House and the Supreme Court held summer sessions here between 1857 and 1861. The hotel has been visited by six Presidents of the United States. Travel to the hotel was by carriage until 1873, when train service was available to bring guests to Bedford for the short carriage ride to the hotel.
- The central Greek Revival building housing the lobby and main dining rooms was designed between 1829 and 1842 by Solomon Filler (1797-1855), architect of the Bedford County Courthouse. The four guest room buildings located to the north were built between 1806-1890. A two-story building housing an indoor pool beneath a vaulted ceiling, a solarium, and hydrotherapy rooms was built in 1903 just south of the lobby/dining room building. A golf course and part of a planned 250-room, five-story expansion building from 1924 sit at the top of the hill. The resort was used as the Naval Radio Training School during World War II, and

Japanese diplomats were detained here when they were captured in Berlin near the end of the war.

Source: Lu Donnelly, David Brumble and Franklin Toker. *Buildings of Pennsylvania: Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, forthcoming.

Historian: Lisa Pfueller Davidson, HABS Historian, 2006.

Project

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